



◀ These warriors decorate a vase from the 500s B.C. The background is the natural color of the baked clay. The black figures were painted on.

### The Dark Ages of Greece

Not long after the end of Troy, civilization in Greece collapsed. No one knows exactly why. Life went on, but poverty was everywhere. People no longer traded for food and other goods beyond Greece. They had to depend on what they could raise themselves. Some were forced to move to islands and

to the western part of Asia Minor. The art of writing disappeared.

These years, from the early 1100s B.C. to about 750 B.C., have been called Greece's Dark Ages. Without writing, people had to depend on word of mouth to keep their traditions and history alive. Old traditions were remembered only in the myths that were told and retold.

Greece's Dark Ages were not completely bleak, however. During this time, families gradually began to resettle in places where they could grow crops and raise animals. Some of these family farms may have developed into villages. When they chose places to build their farms, people favored places near rocky, protected hills where they would be safe from attack. The name for such a place was **acropolis**, meaning "high city."

### Governing the City-States

Sometime around 750 B.C., villages in a small area probably joined together to form a city in the shadow of an acropolis. At that time, each city began to develop its own traditions and its own form of government and laws. Each one was not only a city, but also a separate independent state. Today, we call these tiny nations **city-states**. Each included a city and the villages and fields surrounding it. Hundreds of Greek city-states grew up, each more or less independent.



**Troy Discovered** Over the years, people came to believe that Troy and the Trojan War were fiction. An amateur archaeologist, Heinrich Schliemann, disagreed. In the late 1800s he used clues in the *Iliad* to pinpoint the location of Troy. When he and later archaeologists dug there, they found nine layers of ruins from ancient cities. One was possibly the Troy of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.